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Lambda Letters Project

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Pop the corks: We hit two million!

By Boyce Hinman, chief lobbyist

We are happy to report that in August the Lambda Letters Project and its members and friends delivered the two millionth piece of mail to elected officials. Since only 2000, you all have delivered 2,000,639 letters and e-mails to elected officials.

Those letters and e-mails do make a difference. No less a person than Senator Sheila Kuehl has told us that the work we at Lambda Letters do (that includes *you*) often makes the difference between a bill passing and failing.

The process that Lambda Letters provides for you to use in communicating to your legislators really works. We provide an easy, efficient way for ordinary people to let their legislators know exactly what they should be doing on the important issues of the day. Our process helps people from all across the state to speak loud and clear—and with a unified voice—on those important issues. The massive amount of mail we send to legislators, all of which has a unified message, really gets their attention.

We have delivered over two million letters and e-mails in just over seven years. Can we make it three million by the end of this decade in 2009?

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Help accomplish a dream

By Boyce Hinman, chief lobbyist

It was in 1988 that I and others founded the Lambda Letters Project. Ever since then, Lambda Letters has fought hard for, among other things, the right of same-sex families to enjoy all the rights available to married families. That has been one of my personal dreams since long before founding Lambda Letters.

Together with other individuals and organizations, we have largely succeeded on this issue. There is now a wide array of laws that protect the rights of same-sex families. When you look at the whole picture, we do not yet have the right to marry. Nonetheless, the progress we *have* made is breathtaking.

There is a serious problem with all of this, however. The laws that provide all these new benefits are varied and complex. These laws cover insurance law, property law, inheritance law, and income tax and property tax law, among others. It has become increasingly obvious that most people in the LGBTI community have very limited knowledge of the rights and duties granted to same-sex couples by the domestic partner laws that have been enacted. Sadly this means that many

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Shop for your rights

By Boyce Hinman, chief lobbyist

Lambda Letters Project is one of the premier civil rights organizations in California. We have long been telling you that you can help raise funds for the work of Lambda Letters by doing Internet searches at *www.goodsearch.com*. Every time you do an Internet search at that site, a little bit of money is donated to Lambda Letters—and it costs you nothing.

Now you can also raise money for Lambda Letters by shopping online. The people at GoodSearch have launched GoodShop.com. This is an online shopping mall of world-class merchants dedicated to helping fund worthy causes across the country.

Each purchase made via the GoodShop mall results in a donation to the user's designated charity or school—averaging approximately 3% of the sale but going up to 20% or even more. The percentage of the purchase price that goes to Lambda Letters is listed below the icon of each merchant.

Currently there are over 200 mainstream merchants in every field of business from babies and banking to toys and travel. Major merchants include stores like Macy's,

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Lambda Letters progress report

Letters collected

August, 2007	30,100 letters & e-mails
In all of 2007	242,946 letters & e-mails

Dollars spent

August, 2007	$6,278
In all of 2007	$46,427

Can you help?

Please support the very important work of the Lambda Letters Project with your contributions.

Lambda Letters Project

Our mission

To promote the social, economic, and human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex individuals, couples, and families; people affected by HIV/AIDS; people of color; women; and people of low economic status. We urge elected officials to enact and support legislation that accomplishes this goal.

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Send address changes to the Lambda Letters Project address above or e-mail address.change@lambdaletters.org

Discrimination Complaints

Have you experienced employment discrimination because of your actual or perceived sexual orientation or because of your age (40 and over), ancestry, color, creed, disability, marital status, medical condition, national origin, race, religion, or sex? Have you been denied family and medical care leave or pregnancy disability leave? If so, you may register a complaint with the Department of Fair Employment and Housing.
In cases of employment discrimination, call the department at (800) 884-1684.
In cases of housing discrimination, call (800) 233-3212.
The person answering the phone will schedule an appointment for you at the Department of Fair Employment and Housing Office which is closest to your home or place of employment.

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LGBTI issue

End military discrimination

By Shirin Buckman, legislative analyst

If this county is going to make national security a big priority, we must make the recruitment pool bigger. Therefore, it is necessary to do away with discriminatory practices against the LGBTI community who are serving, or who want to serve, in the military.

Please encourage Congress to pass HR 1246, the Military Readiness Enhancement Act. It is pending in the House Committee on Armed Services. HR 1246 would eliminate the obsolete "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy and allow LGBT men and women to serve openly in the United States military.

Since the Clinton administration's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, this country has not seen a progression of LGBTI military policy. We have, however, seen a significant progression in global military involvement. We are also short on qualified military personnel. A July 9, 2004, *Boston Globe* article, called "Policy on Gays Seen Hurting the Military," states that the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy "has undermined military readiness and hurt national security at a time when the Pentagon is struggling to meet requirements in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other battlegrounds in the war on terrorism."

If the government is serious about making this country safer against international threats to our peace, why have 10,000 qualified personnel been expelled from the military since 1994? According to the *Boston Globe* article, "Some [individuals] who were discharged were trained in increasingly important specialties such as nuclear, chemical, and biological warfare, or were infantry soldiers, intelligence analysts, and foreign translators."

There are consequences of the military's unreasonable policy. Under the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, 88 linguists (including seven who spoke Arabic) and 33 intelligence operatives have been discharged in the last five years because they were found to be gay or lesbian. In 2003, the Pentagon fired nine Arabic linguists because they were gay. They replaced

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People of color issue

Support community health workers

By Marty Martinez, legislative analyst

Many obstacles confront medically underserved communities, such as socio-economic status, language, and cultural barriers. Research has proven that community health workers, often called *promotoras de salud* in the Latino/Latina community, are effective at enrolling eligible but uninsured children into public health insurance programs.

Community health workers reach out to underserved communities in ways that the current health care system cannot. Because community health workers provide culturally and linguistically appropriate health information and assistance, these nontraditional methods help improve the health status of uninsured and underinsured populations.

Congresswoman Hilda L. Solis (D-Calif.) introduced the Community Health Workers Act of 2007. HR 1968 supports the efforts of community health workers, including *promotoras de salud*, by making them eligible for grants through the Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

HR 1968 would allow states, local or tribal governments, and community-based organizations to be eligible for grants for health education, promotion, prevention, and outreach. This legislation promotes positive health behaviors, advances health education for underserved minority communities, and expands access to culturally and linguistically appropriate care.

We urge you to send a letter of support to your member of Congress.

Women's issue

Invest in women to alleviate global poverty

By Alex Widmann, legislative analyst

Global poverty is an issue that not only affects people who are far-removed from our own society, but also has significant repercussions for citizens of this country. Given the international interdependence of our current economic system, the established global marketplace is structured to exclude those most in need of economic earning power, particularly women.

This is significant at a time when women have increasingly become heads of households and in many cases the sole providers for their families. This trend appears throughout the global community, particularly in developing nations. It is a signal that programs to alleviate poverty should target assistance toward these populations.

Children are directly affected by the success of their mothers in the marketplace. The consequences of being unable to secure a job that pays enough to sustain the family are felt by them most acutely. According to Shukor Rahman of the World Food Program, "Every day 11,000 children die of hunger around the world while 200 million suffer from malnutrition and a lack of protein and calories, more than 800 million people are suffering from hunger in the world, and some 70 percent of them are women and children."

Microfinance—which means investing in small entrepreneurs in developing countries—has proven a sound first step in allowing women to participate in the global marketplace and regain earning power. Such programs of providing microloans to women, which allow them to start small businesses, are becoming more popular as their success is noted. Because women statistically are more likely to repay these loans than men, microloans are relatively safe investments to make. It has been shown that as women prosper and become empowered, the local community also tends to improve and the family unit becomes more stable.

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HIV/AIDS issue

Save lives with early treatments

By Lorraine Rinker, legislative analyst

HIV/AIDS legislation and funding is on the top priority list for the 110th Congress. The House and Senate introduced key companion HIV legislation that grants access to lifesaving medical care and treatment.

More people are living with HIV/AIDS in the United States than ever before, and more of them are uninsured or underinsured. Of the more than one million Americans living with HIV and AIDS, 85,000 of them are in California. Companion legislation S 860 and HR 3326 has been introduced for consideration by the 110th Congress to provide early treatment for HIV infection that saves lives and reduces health care costs as progression from HIV to full-blown AIDS is prevented or delayed.

Significant advances in addressing the HIV/AIDS epidemic have been made in this country and the state of California. People with HIV are living longer, healthier lives. Many uninsured, low-income, HIV-positive people still do not have access to lifesaving medications, however, because they generally do not meet Medicaid requirements until they are disabled by full-blown AIDS.

The Early HIV Treatment Act of 2007 (EHTA) allows low-income individuals living with HIV to qualify for Medicaid coverage earlier in the course of their disease. By allowing states to use Medicaid programs to cover the health needs of non-AIDS diagnosed individuals living with HIV, EHTA guarantees access to lifesaving medical care and treatment to hundreds of thousands of people who are currently uninsured or dependent on discretionary health care programs. Early access to lifesaving drug therapies and education to prevent further transmission has proven to be effective in helping people with HIV live longer with the disease.

Another benefit of EHTA is the reduction of long-term health care costs. Making people wait until their immune system is compromised by AIDS is not good health care practice or policy. As Senator Hillary Clinton (D–NY), cosponsor of S 860, said in a press release earlier this year, "Too many Americans with HIV are unable to obtain access to life-extending medical treatments—the very medications that could delay the serious complications of AIDS." She added, "By helping those with HIV get the care they need, we can reduce the need for more expensive care in the long term."

EHTA was developed to supplement "safety-net" programs across the country treating individuals with HIV/AIDS. In many cases, these facilities are running out of money. As a consequence, they are generally unable to cover all the people who need assistance paying for their medical care. EHTA is not an unproven approach, but one modeled after the successful Breast and Cervical Cancer Prevention and Treatment Act of 2000 (BCCPTA), which allows states to provide early access to Medicaid for women with breast and cervical cancer. In the fall of 2004, the Henry J. Kaiser Foundation released a study reporting that many women found the BCCPTA to be an invaluable program, giving them access to lifesaving medical treatment that would otherwise have been out of their reach.

According to Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi (D–Calif.), an HR 3326 cosponsor, "Early treatment for HIV infection saves lives and reduces health care costs. It also strengthens our economy, as individuals who receive appropriate treatment are able to return to work or continue working as their disability is delayed."

Please write to your member of Congress and ask them to approve companion legislation S 860 and HR 3326. With the passage of the Early Treatment for HIV Act of 2007, people living with HIV will be able to stay healthy and active.

Economic justice issue

Improve access to child health care

By Rebecca Chamow, legislative analyst

Congress recently found that over 9 million children in the United States under the age of 19 are currently uninsured. Of these, 6.8 million are eligible for the Medicaid program or the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) but are not enrolled.

Two-thirds of these 9 million uninsured children come from families in which one or both parents are working but were not offered employer-based health insurance or were unable to buy private health insurance. This is a severe problem, because uninsured children are five times less likely than insured children to have a primary care physician, or to have visited a doctor or dentist in the past two years.

This session, Congresswoman Kathy Castor (D–Fla.) introduced HR 2055, the Improving Children's Access to Healthcare Act of 2007. This act would give states several options by which to improve children's access to health care coverage under Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP).

Among the main provisions of the bill is an allowance for states to choose to enact "express lane" eligibility so that children who meet other low-income public program eligibility requirements (such as the WIC program, the school lunch program, and other means-tested programs) are automatically enrolled for benefits under the appropriate plan. This would significantly increase the insurance coverage of children from low-income households.

Additionally, this bill would allow states the option to include children of low-income state employees in SCHIP. This bill presents several good options for increasing the availability of health care coverage to low-income families. It is a very important step toward improving health care availability on a national scale.

Please write to your member of the House of Representatives. Urge him or her to do everything possible to get this bill approved.

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October legislative update

Exactly when this year's legislative session ends has been a little fuzzy. The official ending date was to have been September 14. However, it is now reported that the Legislature had its last official day of this session on September 12. So the session is now over for this year and the status line on each of the bills shown below should be the correct final status for this year, barring late posting of results on one or two of them. The Legislature's next regular meeting for this legislative session will occur in early January.

However, the governor says he is calling a special session of the Legislature to work on health insurance and water issues. This special session could begin in late September. In theory, legislators would work only on those two issues during the special session. But you never know.

You will see that some bills were placed in the "inactive file." Usually this means the author feels the Legislature is not ready to pass it or the governor is likely to veto it. Putting the bill in the inactive file keeps it alive into next year and gives the author more time to work on gaining support for the bill.

The governor has until October 14 to decide whether or not he will sign a bill sent to him. If he makes no decision on a bill by that date, it becomes law without his signature.

Here is a list of the bills we are tracking at this time.

HIV/AIDS issues

AB 66 (Merv Dymally, D–Compton)
Purpose: To require that prison inmates be tested for HIV shortly after imprisonment and shortly before release from prison unless the person declines testing. If they are found to be HIV-positive prior to release from prison, inmates' parole officers must be told. Inmates' spouses or domestic partners would also be told. Would require that a care and treatment plan should be devised for each inmate who tests positive. Would require that HIV-positive inmates be referred to treatment after release.
Status: Failed in the Senate Appropriations Committee. **LLP position:** Support.

AB 110 (John Laird, D–Santa Cruz)
Purpose: To allow local governments that establish clean needle and syringe exchange programs to use state general funds to purchase clean needles and syringes for use in their programs. They can spend up to 7.5% of general funds they receive for HIV education and prevention. But they must match each dollar spent this way with 43 cents of non-state government funds or private funds.
Status: Sent to the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 659 (Fiona Ma, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To urge the development of age-appropriate HIV/AIDS educational materials for youth and senior citizens. Would also request the University of California to study the impact of HIV/AIDS on seniors.
Status: Failed in the Senate Appropriations Committee. **LLP position:** Support.

AB 1334 (Sandre Swanson, D–Alameda)
Purpose: To allow the distribution of condoms and other sexual barriers to prison inmates.
Status: Sent to the governor.
LLP position: Support.

SB 443 (Carole Migden, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To allow the use for therapeutic insemination of sperm or use of sperm in other advanced reproductive technologies if the sperm donor is found reactive for HIV or HTLV-1.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP position: Watch.

Economic justice issues

AB 1 (Merv Dymally, D–Compton)
Purpose: To improve children's access to health insurance and delete the citizenship and immigration status requirements to qualify for the Medi-Cal and Healthy Families programs.
Status: Sent to the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 2 (Merv Dymally, D–Compton)
Purpose: To continue a program that provides affordable health insurance to those who are otherwise uninsurable due to medical history.
Status: Placed in the Senate inactive file..
LLP position: Support.

AB 8 (Fabian Núñez, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To create, as of January 1, 2009, the California Cooperative Health Insurance Purchasing Program (Cal-CHIPP), which would function as a purchasing pool for health care coverage by employers.
Status: Sent to the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 12 (Jim Beall, D–San Jose)
Purpose: To provide health insurance to the employees of small businesses as a pilot project in Santa Clara County.
Status: Sent to the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 167 (Karen Bass, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To help people transition from CalWORKs to self-sufficiency by eliminating the limit on assets they can have and still qualify for CalWORKs.
Status: Failed in the Senate Appropriations Committee. **LLP position:** Support.

AB 176 (Dave Jones, D–Sacramento)
Purpose: Current law states that a participant in CalWORKs who receives any child support must turn that money (except $50) over to the CalWORKs program. This bill states that a CalWORKs recipient cannot keep any child support money.
Status: Sent to the governor.
LLP position: Oppose.

AB 184 (Karen Bass, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To increase the fees paid to Medi-Cal service providers.
Status: Placed in the Senate inactive file.
LLP position: Support.

AB 1078 (Sally Lieber, D–Mountain View)
Purpose: To delete the maximum amount of savings and interest that a CalWORKs recipient would be permitted to retain. The bill would extend the provisions excluding from income the principal and interest in the designated federal savings plans to CalWORKs applicants.
Status: Sent to the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 1413 (Anthony Portantino, D–Canada Flintridge)
Purpose: To establish tighter compensation rules and greater transparency in compensation for California State University executives.
Status: Sent to the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

AJR 3 (Merv Dymally, D–Compton)
Purpose: To ask Congress and the president to increase funds for the Low Income Energy Assistance Program.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Utilities and Commerce Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP position: Support.

SB 11 (Carole Migden, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To allow virtually any two people to register as domestic partners, eliminating the requirement that domestic partners be of the same sex or that one of them be over 62 (in the case of opposite-sex couples).
Status: Failed in the Assembly Appropriations Committee. **LLP position:** Support.

SB 32 (Darrell Steinberg, D–Sacramento)
Purpose: To allow all California children whose family income is under 300% of the federal poverty level to have access to the Medi-Cal and Healthy Families programs. It would also

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Legislative update

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eliminate the rules that deny coverage to some based on citizenship or immigration status.
Status: Placed in the Assembly inactive file.
LLP position: Support.

SB 42 (Tom Torlakson, D–Concord)
Purpose: To qualify for CalWORKs public assistance, people must be engaged in work activities, with certain exceptions, unless they are enrolled in an approved education program. This bill would also exempt them from work if they have applied for, but not yet been accepted by, an approved education program.
Status: Placed in the Assembly inactive file.
LLP position: Support.

SB 48 (Elaine Alquist, D–San Jose)
Purpose: To require the state, to the extent that funds are appropriated, to establish the "Healthy Food Retail Innovations Fund," providing residents of underserved communities with retail food markets that would offer high-quality fruit, vegetables, and other healthy foods and encourage retail innovation. Would also require the state to provide grants and loans for land acquisition, business plan development, feasibility studies, refrigeration units, outside technical assistance, and other startup costs. Fund to run until January 1, 2015.
Status: Failed in the Assembly Appropriations Committee. **LLP position:** Support.

SB 119 (Gilbert Cedillo, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To require that residential drug and alcohol treatment services for persons aged 12 to 20 be a benefit covered by the Medi-Cal Drug Treatment Program.
Status: Failed in the Assembly inactive file.
LLP position: Support.

SB 137 (Tom Torlackson, D–Antioch)
Purpose: The state and counties run treatment services for physically handicapped persons under the age of 21 in families with income of $40,000 or less. This bill would change that eligibility limitation to persons in a family with an annual, or equivalent monthly income, equal to or less than $40,000, or that meets the income eligibility requirements for the Healthy Families Program.
Status: Sent to the governor.
LLP position: Support.

SB 275 (Gil Cedillo, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To prohibit hospitals from dumping indigent patients on the streets after discharging them from the hospital.
Status: Sent to the governor.
LLP position: Support.

SB 785 (Darrell Steinberg, D–Sacramento)
Purpose: To establish forms and procedures to provide mental health care to certain children in foster care.
Status: Sent to the governor.
LLP position: Support.

SB 840 (Sheila Kuehl, D–Santa Monica)
Purpose: To establish a single-payer health insurance program (where the state collects funds from various sources and then pays all medical bills), which would provide affordable health insurance to every person in California.
Status: Placed in the Assembly inactive file.
LLP position: Support.

LGBTI issues

AB 14 (John Laird, D–Santa Cruz)
Purpose: To prohibit California businesses from withholding services to customers because of the customer's sexual orientation, among other things, or from encouraging other businesses to do so. **Status:** Sent to the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 43 (Mark Leno, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To allow same-sex couples to marry in California.
Status: Sent to the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 102 (Fiona Ma, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To allow a woman to retain her maiden name when she marries. It would allow men to easily change their last name to their wife's maiden name when they marry. Would also allow either or both domestic partners to change their name when registering their domestic partnership, using the same simple procedure a women now uses in changing her last name when she marries.
Status: Sent to the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 384 (Anthony Portantino, D–La Canada Flintridge)
Purpose: To provide health insurance to the surviving spouse, domestic partner, or surviving child or stepchild of a deceased federal firefighter who was performing services in this state, upon specified circumstances.
Status: Sent to the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 392 (Ted Lieu, D–Torrance)
Purpose: To require employers to allow an employee who is a spouse of a member of the armed forces, National Guard, or Reserves to take up to 10 days of unpaid leave during a leave period of the service member.
Status: Sent to the governor.
LLP position: Support if bill is amended to include domestic partners of service members.

AB 394 (Lloyd Levine, D–Van Nuys)
Purpose: To require the State Department of Education to monitor adherence to the anti-discrimination and anti-harassment requirements as part of its regular monitoring and review of public schools and school districts.
Status: Sent to the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 537 (Sandre Swanson, D–Alameda)
Purpose: To require employers to allow employees to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave in a 12-month period to care for a seriously ill domestic partner, among others.
Status: Sent to the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 629 (Julia Brownley, D–Santa Monica)
Purpose: To require school-based sex education programs to be comprehensive, age-appropriate, and medically accurate. They must not teach religion or encourage bias against people on any of several bases, including sexual orientation.
Status: Sent to the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AJR 29 (Mike Eng, D–Monterey Park)
Purpose: To ask Congress to add bans on sexual orientation and gender identity hate crimes to the federal hate crimes law.
Status: Given final approval by the Legislature. No action by the governor needed.
LLP position: Support.

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SB 105 (Carole Migden, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To establish a procedure that will clarify how domestic partners should compute their taxes in light of the fact that federal tax law and state tax law treat domestic partners differently.
Status: Sent to the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 518 (Carole Migden, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To require the Division of Juvenile Justice and local juvenile facilities to provide care, placement, and services to children in their custody without discriminating on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, among others.
Status: Sent to the governor.
LLP position: Support.

SB 559 (Christine Kehoe, D–San Diego)
Purpose: To require that any transfer of property between registered domestic partners that occurred on or after January 1, 2000, and before January 1, 2006, be exempt from reappraisal and increased property taxes based upon a reappraisal. If a person requests reversal of a previous reappraisal, because of this law, on or before June 30, 2009, the county must do it. But the reversed reappraisal would be effective only from the time the request was made.
Status: Sent to the governor.
LLP position: Support.

SB 727 (Sheila Kuehl, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To expand the types of people that an employee can take six weeks of partly paid leave to care for, to include the parents of one's domestic partner
Status: Sent to the governor.
LLP position: Support.

SB 777 (Sheila Kuehl, D-Santa Monica)
Purpose: To ban employment discrimination in public and private colleges and universities, or discrimination in instructional activities, or in educational materials on the bases of disability, gender, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic contained in the definition of hate crimes found in California law.
Status: Sent to the governor.
LLP position: Support.

People of color issues

AB 34 (Anthony Portantino, D–Pasadena)
Purpose: To require the state to create a pilot program to increase the ethnic diversity of the umbilical cord blood supply in blood banks. It would select blood banks in ethnically diverse areas to participate in the program.
Status: Sent to the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 72 (Merv Dymally, D–Compton)
Purpose: To encourage schools to teach about the contributions of Filipinos during World War II.
Status: Sent to the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 174 (Curren Price, D–Irvine)
Purpose: To allow the State Personnel Board to order a state agency that is found to discriminate in its employment actions to take various remedial actions, including payment of reasonable attorney's fees to the employee.
Status: Sent to the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 288 (Curren Price, D–Inglewood)
Purpose: To fine those who intimidate people to either vote or not vote. Would use fines to pay for voter education programs.
Status: Sent to the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 295 (Ted Lieu, D–Torrance)
Purpose: To require state agencies, when collecting demographic data, to include categories allowing people to identify themselves as members of particular races or nationalities that are not currently on the list.
Status: Sent to the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 512 (Sally Lieber, D–Mountain View)
Purpose: To require that when a businessperson negotiates specified loans or extensions of credit primarily in the languages of Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Korean, that person must also provide summaries of the loan or credit documents in those languages.
Status: Held in the Senate Banking Committee. May be considered next year.
LLP position: Support.

AB 658 (Karen Bass, D-Los Angeles)
Purpose: To establish the Community Homicide and Violence Reduction Program to be administered by the Office of Emergency Services, in consultation with the State Department of Public Health. The program would award grants on a competitive basis to community-based organizations for the development and implementation of evidence-based approaches for homicide and violence prevention, as specified. This bill would require the Office of Emergency Services, in consultation with the State Department of Public Health, to create an evaluation design for the program that will assess its effectiveness. The purpose of the program would be to reduce violence and homicide among African Americans.
Status: Sent to the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 976 (Charles Calderon, D–Whittier)
Purpose: To prohibit a city, county, or city and county from requiring a landlord to, among other things, compile, disclose, report, provide, or otherwise take any action regarding the characteristics of a tenant or a prospective tenant based on the immigration or citizenship status of that tenant. The bill would also prohibit a landlord from independently performing any of these acts.
Status: Sent to the governor.
LLP position: Support.

ACR 21 (Anthony Portantino, D–La Canada Flintridge)
Purpose: To urge the regents of the University of California to establish a student exchange program, or another form of academic partnership, between one or more campuses of the University of California and one or more of the institutions that are classified as historically black colleges and universities.
Status: Failed in the Senate Appropriations Committee. **LLP position:** Support.

AJR 2 (Merv Dymally, D–Compton)
Purpose: To ask Congress and the president to give veterans benefits to Filipino Americans who served in the US armed services during World War II.
Status: Approved by the Legislature. No action by the governor needed.
LLP position: Support.

SB 1 (Gil Cedillo, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To allow certain undocumented immigrants to qualify for student aid from certain private sources when attending public colleges and universities in California.
Status: Sent to the governor.
LLP position: Support.

SB 26 (Joseph Simitian, D–Palo Alto)
Purpose: To require state agencies to allow people to select one or more categories when agencies obtain information about people's ethnicity.
Status: Failed in the Assembly Appropriations Committee. **LLP position:** Support.

SB 60 (Gil Cedillo, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To allow the state to issue driver's licenses to certain undocumented immigrants when approval of that action is approved by the federal government as allowed under the federal real ID act.
Status: Placed in the Assembly inactive file.
LLP position: Support.

SB 192 (Denise Ducheny, D–San Diego)
Purpose: To continue a program for which certain licensing requirements were due to expire in 2008. The program provides a group, employer-provided health insurance program for Mexican nationals legally employed in San Diego and Imperial Counties for medical care provided to employees and their families in Mexico. The doctors providing treatment must meet licensing

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Legislative update

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requirements in both California and Mexico. The bill extends this licensing requirement indefinitely.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP position: Support.

SB 552 (Gil Cedillo, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To establish a program for providing compensation to those who were unconstitutionally deported to Mexico during the 1930s.
Status: Failed in the Assembly Appropriations Committee. **LLP position:** Support.

SCR 58 (Gil Cedillo, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To encourage schools to teach about the illegal deportations of Mexican American US citizens and legal residents during the 1930s.
Status: Approved by the Legislature. No action by the governor needed.
LLP position: Support.

Women's issues

AB 28 (Jared Huffman, D–San Rafael)
Purpose: To extend the program that allows people to send additional dollars with their state income tax returns, and to ask that the extra money be given to the California Breast Cancer Research Fund.
Status: Sent to the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 76 (Sally Lieber, D–San Jose)
Purpose: To require the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to design rehabilitation programs to meet the unique needs of women prisoners.
Status: Sent to the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 225 (Jim Beall, D–San Jose)
Purpose: To reduce the number of harassing phone calls to another person that is required to trigger penalties for making harassing phone calls. It would make the law tougher on those who harass others.
Status: Approved by the Assembly. Referred to the Senate Public Safety Committee. No hearing date set yet. **LLP position:** Support.

AB 268 (Charles Calderon, D–Montebello)
Purpose: To excuse from testifying in court people who attend the hearing but refuse to testify because of intimidation by one of the parties to the court case.
Status: Held in the Senate Judiciary Committee. Hearing postponed by committee.
LLP position: Support.

AB 335 (Kevin De Leon, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To allow CalWORKs public assistance to be provided to a domestic abuse victim on the basis of sworn statements that he or she became homeless because of domestic abuse.
Status: Sent to the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 435 (Julia Brownley, D–Santa Monica)
Purpose: To require employers to keep wage and job classification records for up to five years. This would allow employees up to five years to file sex-based wage discrimination complaints against employers and collect back wages due.
Status: Sent to the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 502 (Charles Calderon, D–Montebello)
Purpose: To enact legislation creating a pilot program in Los Angeles that enables a community-based organization to provide legal advice and aid to victims of domestic violence who are undocumented immigrants.
Status: Sent to the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 603 (Curren Price, D–Inglewood)
Purpose: To extend the deadline until 2013 of laws that protect the confidentiality of victims of domestic violence who seek help from domestic violence programs, and of people who are served by family planning programs.
Status: Sent to the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 1275 (Mark DeSaulnier, D–Concord)
Purpose: To allow counties to increase fees for copies of marriage certificates, birth certificates, and death records for the purpose of funding governmental oversight and coordination of domestic violence prevention, early intervention, and prosecution efforts in the county—up to a maximum increase of $4.
Status: Approved by the Assembly. Sent to the Senate Local Government Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP position: Support.

AB 1429 (Noreen Evans, D–Santa Rosa)
Purpose: To require health care services plans and health insurance contracts to cover the cost of cervical cancer vaccination.
Status: Sent to the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 1679 (Noreen Evans, D–Santa Rosa)
Purpose: To amend current law to allow attorney's fees to be included in support payments due to a child in a divorce or separation case.
Status: Approved by the Assembly. Referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee. Hearing cancelled by the author.
LLP position: Support.

ACR 11 (Jim Beall, D–San Jose)
Purpose: To declare October 2007 as Domestic Violence Awareness Month.
Status: Approved by the Legislature. No action by the governor needed.
LLP position: Support.

ACR 15 (Sally Lieber, D–Mountain View)
Purpose: To commemorate January 2007 as Cervical Cancer Awareness Month.
Status: Introduced. **LLP position:** Support.

AJR 4 (Jim Beall, D–San Jose)
Purpose: To ask Congress to end a $25 fee charged to families who do not go on public assistance but who do receive at least $500 in child support with the help of a state child support collection program.
Status: Approved by the Legislature. No action by the governor needed.
LLP position: Support.

SB 265 (Gloria Romero, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To state that the Division of Juvenile Justice shall explore options to provide programming for female offenders outside of division facilities. On or before January 1, 2009, the division shall transfer all female offenders out of division facilities.
Status: Placed in the Assembly inactive file.
LLP position: Support.

SB 836 (Sheila Kuehl, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To ban employment discrimination based on familial status, meaning employers could not discriminate against a person who does or may have to care for another family member.
Status: Sent to the governor.
LLP position: Support.

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AIDS care dollars: Shortchanging people of color?

By Boyce Hinman, chief lobbyist

This article cites a lot of percentages, but please bear with me. I am doing this to prove an important point. According to the National Centers for Disease Control (CDC), there have been 988,376 cumulative diagnosed cases of AIDS reported in the United States. Of those cases, 385,537 occurred among white non-Hispanic people, and slightly more (397,548) among black non-Hispanic people. There have been 155,179 cumulative cases of AIDS reported among Hispanics in this nation.

Therefore, in overall percentages, 39% of diagnosed cases were among white non-Hispanic people, 40% were among black non-Hispanic people, and 16% were among Hispanic people.

Some of the people counted above have died from AIDS. According to the CDC, 31% of those now living with AIDS are white, 48% of them are black, and 18% of them are Hispanic.

According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, in 2005, 29.1% of new AIDS cases nationally occurred among whites, 48.4% were among blacks, and 20.3% were among Hispanics.

Three things stand out in all these statistics. First, the total number of people of color who have been diagnosed with AIDS is almost one and a half times that of whites. Second, the number of people of color currently living with AIDS is over twice the number of whites living with the disease. Third, well over twice as many people of color are now being diagnosed with AIDS as compared to white people each year.

It is worth noting that the cumulative number of cases and the numbers of new cases of AIDS among blacks is way out of proportion to their presence in the general population. African-Americans are reported to be about 11% of the national population and a little over 7% of the population of California. And yet they make up 40% of those diagnosed with AIDS since the epidemic began, and 48% of those being diagnosed with AIDS each year in recent years.

What are the racial breakdowns in California? According to the California Office of AIDS, as of the end of 2006, 48.6% of those living with AIDS in California are white, 18.9% are black, and 29.4% are Hispanic

Now let's look at those who receive assistance under the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP). This is the primary program that helps people with AIDS pay for their very expensive medications. The Kaiser Family Foundation reports that, nationally, 36% of those receiving help from ADAP are white, 33% of them are black, and 26% of them are Hispanic. In California, the figures are 40% white, 11% black, and 41% Hispanic.

Nationally, therefore, 66% of those now living with AIDS are people of color and 59% of those receiving help from ADAP are people of color. In the state of California, 48.3% of those living with AIDS are people of color and 52% of those receiving help from ADAP are people of color. That makes it look as though people of color are getting their fair share of ADAP help in California and a little less than their fair share nationally.

That might make us feel good. However, we must remember the other figures quoted above: 48% of new cases every year occur among African-Americans and 20% occur among Hispanics. This means that an ever-increasing number of people living with AIDS will be people of color. We will need to remain vigilant to be sure that this population continues to get its fair share of help.

What about women—and African-American women in particular? Are they getting adequate access to ADAP and other HIV/AIDS programs and funding? Today women account for more than 25% of all new HIV/AIDS diagnoses. In fact, AIDS is now the leading cause of death for African-American women aged 25–34. Are women—and African-American women in particular—getting adequate access to ADAP and related programs?

I will discuss that topic in the next issue of this newsletter.

Women's issue

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HB 2965, or the Resources and Opportunities for Women to Thrive (GROWTH) Act of 2007, incorporates microfinance as just one of several components of a proposal directly targeting women for assistance. This bill benefits the global population of women by supporting economic enterprise and providing resources with the aim of making women in developing countries self-sufficient providers for themselves and their families.

HR 2965 specifically helps women in the areas of microenterprises, small and medium sized enterprises, private property rights and land tenure security, employment access, trade benefits, exchanges with US entrepreneurs, and indigenous women's organizations. It directs the Secretary of State to establish the Global Resources and Opportunities for Women to Thrive Fund to increase opportunities for very poor and low-income women in the aforementioned areas.

This fund would directly enhance economic opportunities for women by "increasing women-owned enterprise development, increasing property rights for women, increasing women's access to financial services; increasing women in leadership in implementing organizations, such as indigenous nongovernmental organizations, community-based organizations, and regulated financial intermediaries, improving women's employment benefits and conditions; and increasing women's ability to benefit from global trade."

Investing in women is truly an investment in our global well-being. It has been shown that the success of women is directly linked to the success of children and communities. As members of a global community, we cannot afford to ignore this link. Supporting this comprehensive bill is just one important step in helping women benefit from global trade and participate in the global economy in previously unimagined ways. Please urge your member of the House of Representatives to support this important legislation.

Governor calls a special session

By Boyce Hinman, chief lobbyist

The governor has called two simultaneous special sessions of the state Legislature. One of them focuses on health insurance reform; the other focuses on water issues.

The legislators were supposed to have finished their business on September 14 at the latest. However, because of the governor's call, they will stay in Sacramento in a special session to work on these two issues. We will attempt to monitor the new concepts or bills on health insurance reform and make it possible for the community to provide input on those concepts and bills.

This is a very important issue. Currently over six million people in California have no health insurance. Even though many of them are working, their employers do not provide health insurance. For many, health insurance is just too expensive.

Some legislators have proposed keeping essentially the same health insurance system in place, but requiring everyone to buy insurance. Massachusetts tried that idea but ended up having to excuse 25% of the uninsured because they clearly could not afford the insurance available from private insurance companies.

Some legislators have suggested that they could fix this problem by requiring insurance companies to insure everyone. They can issue policies in which the insured people have to pay the first $5,000 to $10,000 in medical costs. The premiums for these policies might be lower, but paying the initial medical costs could bankrupt many people.

Because of time constraints, it may not be possible to provide you with sample letters by regular mail. We will probably have to do it via our e-mail alerts. With these alerts, we can keep you informed about what concepts for health insurance reform are being considered and what health insurance reform legislation is being introduced. We can also provide a way for you to express your opinion on those concepts and bills. Our alerts will usually have a sample message you can send to legislators to let them know how you feel about the concepts and bills being considered.

If you are already on our e-mail alert list, you will be getting these alerts as the special session unfolds. If you are not on our e-mail alert list, you can easily join by e-mailing *LambdaLP@aol.com* and putting the word "Subscribe" on the subject line of your message.

You can stay informed about health insurance legislation being introduced by visiting *www.lambdaletters.org* and clicking on Legislative Update. Scroll through the list of bills to the section called "Special Session Health Insurance Bills." As bills are introduced, we will post their descriptions there.

The eventual shape that health insurance reform takes in California can be absolutely wonderful or—like electric utility deregulation a few years ago—an absolute disaster. We at Lambda Letters hope you will stay involved.

Help us make it wonderful!

Help accomplish a dream

Continued from page 1

couples will benefit little from the laws we have worked so hard to get passed.

We at Lambda Letters have a plan that we think hits that problem head on. It would create a program that would, in time, bring widespread understanding of these laws to a broad portion of the LGBTI community. This would enable people to take full advantage of the domestic partner laws of the state of California.

Our plan is to provide a series of classes that would teach people about their rights and obligations under California's domestic partner laws. We would also support and train them in providing that same information to others in their communities. In so doing, the program would provide concrete, useful information on domestic partner rights to an ever-widening body of people. In time, it could spread knowledge about domestic partner rights throughout the LGBTI community.

This program is based on the model of a very successful nationwide program called the Master Gardener program, which teaches people about gardening and helps them participate in teaching others.

We intend to hire someone to seek grants to help pay for the program and to do much of the work of getting it started. We have someone in mind who would do an excellent job. But we need at least $9,000 in seed money to put her to work doing these things. This seed money would be used to pay her until she can bring in grants and other donations to help pay for the program. Senator Sheila Kuehl and Assemblymember Mark Leno have already contributed $500 each to help get us started. Two of our members have contributed an additional $1,500. But we are still $6,500 short.

I hope you will make a generous contribution to help us reach that goal of $9,000. Please help us begin the educational program that will make it possible for all members of the LGBTI community to benefit fully from the domestic partner laws we have worked so hard to create. If you make out your check to the Lambda Letters Foundation, you can take a tax deduction for your contribution.

Please help me fulfill my dream. Please support our educational project by enclosing your check with your signed letters or by sending your contribution to:

Lambda Letters Foundation
717 K Street, Suite 224
Sacramento, CA 95814

Please put "Fulfill the dream" on the note line of your check. Alternatively, you can contribute online by going to the Lambda Letters website at *www.lambdaletters.org* and clicking on Contributions/Membership.

Pop the corks

Continued from page 1

A lot of that depends on you. To accomplish that goal, we ask that you return your letters to us promptly each month. If you are on our e-mail alert list, watch for the alerts we send out and respond promptly to them all. If you are not on the alert list, and would like to be, please e-mail *LambdaLP@aol.com* with the word "Subscribe" on the subject line.

In addition, it is very important that you help us find others to join Lambda Letters and to get our monthly newsletter and sample letters. Also ask your friends to join our e-mail alert system.

Thank you for helping us accomplish the first two million this decade. Here's to the third million!

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Shop for your rights

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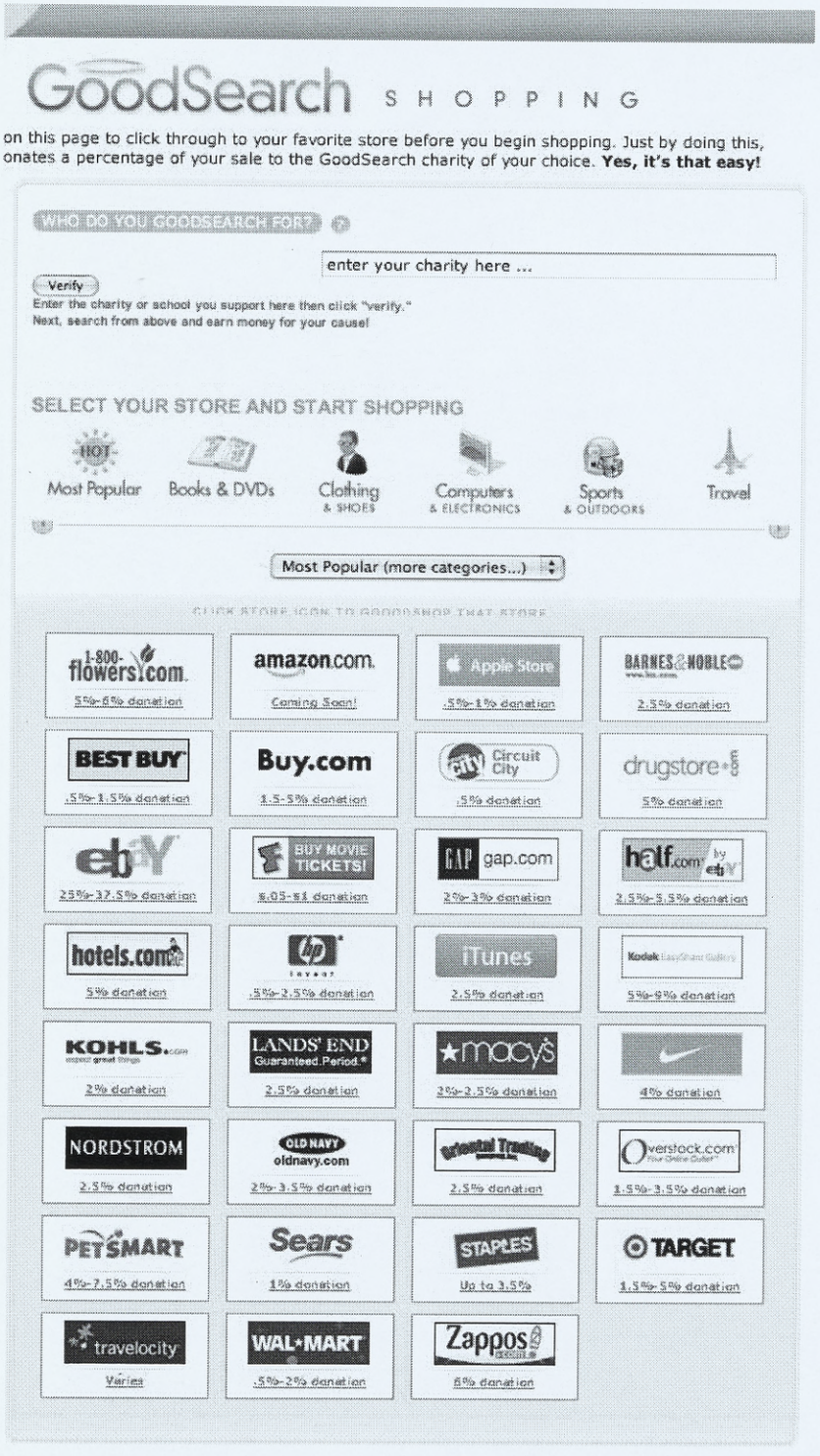
Best Buy, The Gap, Amazon.com, Lands' End, Apple Store, and Barnes & Noble (see figure below). If you've done any online shopping this past year, chances are good you already know these vendors.

Try it out. Direct your browser to *www.goodshop.com*. Once you get to the GoodShop page, type the words **Lambda Letters Project** in the entry box near the top of the page.

Then click the icon of the merchant where you want to shop. As long as "Lambda Letters Foundation – Lambda Letters Project" appears in the box under "Who do you GoodSearch for?", we will get a percentage of your sale.

Please support Lambda Letters. When you do go online to shop, please first go to GoodShop.com.



LGBTI issue

Continued from page 3

those nine with heterosexual Arabic linguists, three of whom were later charged with espionage.

The military sabotages itself by discharging well-qualified, competent recruits simply because they are gay. According to an April 13, 2005, *Washington Post* article, they waste $19 million each year to kick out homosexuals and retrain heterosexuals to do the same job. It is shocking that Congress lets this happen.

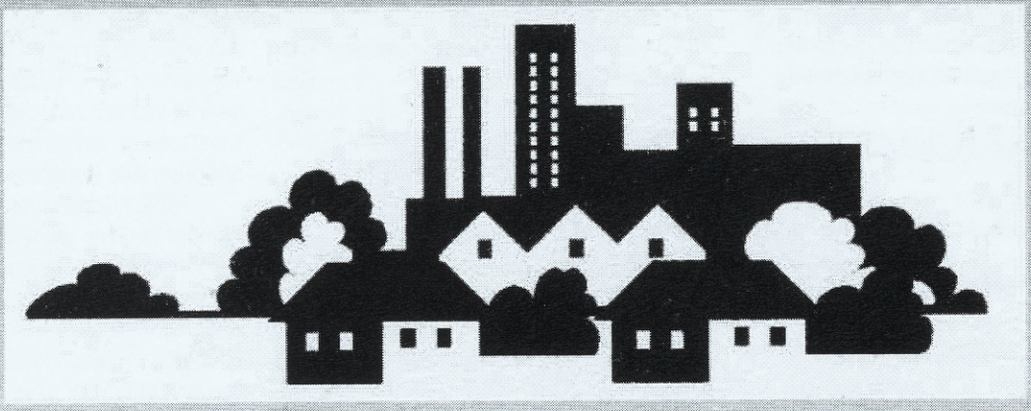
Since September 11, 2001, the number of gays and lesbians discharged from the military has been cut in half. The obvious reason for this trend is increased demand for trained personnel. However, changing societal attitudes also factors into the acceptance of gays in the military. According to Tolerance.org, a Fox News poll conducted in 2003 "shows that 64% of Americans now favor allowing gays to serve openly in the military, up from 56% in a similar poll taken in 2001."

If Fox News viewers are accepting of gays in the military, it is time for Congress to follow suit.

The British government has already opened its military to LGBT service men and women. They have reported no problems with this policy.

So far, 131 members of Congress have cosponsored the Military Readiness Enhancement Act. Some policymakers and military generals who helped put this policy into place in the early 1990s now call the policy a failure.

It is time for progress in our national security policy. Even the title of the act ("Military Readiness Enhancement Act") is quite telling. Please write your Congressional representative and tell them that we cannot afford to compromise our national security because of an old, discriminatory policy. Ask them to support a fair policy that not only treats all individuals as equals, but also strengthens our national security.



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